

STILES HALL

A Community Service Agency
Founded 1884

February 17, 2012

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To Whom It May Concern:

I have known George Austin for the past five years as a student organizer, a campus leader, and as a core employee of Stiles Hall. George is the most hard-working multi-talented, and deeply moral students I have know in my thirty-five years supervising students and staff. He has overcome exceptional odds to develop into one of the mostly highly respected Black student leaders and young professionals in the Bay Area.

For the last two years, he has served as the Director at Stiles Hall's Experience Berkeley, a corporate sponsored, quarter million dollar a year program whose goal is to increase the number of Black, Latino and Native American students applying to and attending U.C. Berkeley. The program identifies promising high school and community college students and brings them to the Berkeley campus in small groups where they are introduced to college life, taken to classes, introduced to test taking and essay writing strategies, and mentored throughout the application process. Students who apply and are accepted are brought back to campus for meetings with faculty, students, and financial aid officers. Under George's leadership, over 700 students applied, statewide and 52% were admitted. "This is phenomenal for any outreach program", according to Walter Robinson, Director of Admissions

His leadership and supervision of twelve half-time student employees and countless volunteers has been nuanced, authoritative yet inclusive and, often, inspirational. I honestly do not believe that the program would have the numerical success and corporate sponsorship it has without his tireless efforts. He has learned the multitude of tasks necessary to such a complex operation quickly, by being consistently open to feedback and assiduously following through on details. Humble almost to a fault, he is nevertheless able to exert his authority whenever the situation calls for it. It is remarkable to me that someone his age can effectively manage people from such a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities.

As a student leader, George was the President, Vice Treasurer, and Chair of the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*. He also served as Chairman of *People and Congregations Together – Youth in Action*, and helped convince his Congressional representative to commit \$100,000 for the educational needs of students in low income families. While attending U.C. Berkeley full time and maintaining a rigorous academic schedule, he worked over thirty hours a week in three jobs simultaneously, at Greenlining Public Policy and Advocacy Group, the Cross Cultural Student Center and in the Assistant Vice-Provost's Office.

George has demonstrated competence and drive beyond his years, utter dedication to the betterment of those less fortunate, and a warmth and sense of humor that make him a constant pleasure to have around.

I recommend George without reservation for your fellowship.

Sincerely,

David Stark
Executive Director

